

## QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT KI TISA

**Q-1. (a)** (1) *Hashem* told *Moshe* how to conduct a census – why did *Moshe* count *Bnei Yisrael* now? (2) Why is conducting a census briefly mentioned here, whereas, *Bamidbar* 1:1 – 4:49 is an extensive, detailed count? **(b)** For whom did the ½ *shekel* atone? **(c)** Why did *Hashem* order giving ½, not full, *shekalim* (6 reasons)? **(d)** Why does the *Torah* (1) say, “*ve-natnu ish*” (a man shall give), with “*ve-natnu*” plural, but “*ish*” singular? (2) use the word “*teruma*” (donation) 3 times? (*Shemot* 30:12-15)

**A-1. (a)** (1) *Hashem* told him to collect the ½ *shekalim* from *Bnei Yisrael* to atone for their sins and for the *avoda* of the *Ohel Mo'ed* (the *Mishkan*) – since he was about to build it, he inferred that he should count and collect the *shekalim* from them now; (2) for the *Bamidbar* census, *Moshe* and *Aharon* systematically visited every tent to assure that the count was accurate – here, to quickly collect the funds needed for the *korbanot*, *Moshe* merely instructed every man between 20 and 60 come forward and give a ½ *shekel* (*Ramban*). **(b)** For all of *Bnei Yisrael* who witnessed the *cheit ha'eigel* but did not protest nor answer *Moshe's* call to destroy the sinners (*Shemot Raba*). **(c)** (1) This money atoned for the *cheit ha'eigel*, made at midday – *Bnei Yisrael* should have waited another ½ day, signified by the ½ *shekel*, for *Moshe's* return; (2) a *shekel* equaled 20 *geirot* – at the *cheit ha'eigel*, *Bnei Yisrael* violated all 10 *Aseret haDibrot* and gave 10 *geirot* (½ *shekel*) to atone for the 10 sins; (3) *Yosef's* 10 brothers sold him for 10 silver *dinarim*, equaling 5 *shekels* – each received a ½ *shekel* – the ½ *shekel* donations atoned for *Yosef's* brothers' sin (*Shekalim* 3b). (4) The ½ *shekel* conveys that one can never fulfill all his desires; (5) a man without a woman is called *peleg gufa* (½ a body) – since only the men, not the women, sinned in the *cheit ha'eigel*, *Hashem* commanded each man to give ½ *shekel*, since only “½ of him” sinned; (6) since *kol Yisrael areivim zeh la-zeh* (all of *Bnei Yisrael* are responsible for one another), each of us individually is less than whole, symbolized by the ½ *shekel* – we must join others to be in complete service to *Hashem* (*Alshich*). **(d)** (1) The word *ve-natnu* is a palindrome, spelled the same forward and backwards, telling us that what one gives to *tzedaka* will come back to him – he will lose nothing by giving (*Ba'al haTurim*). (2) *Bnei Yisrael* gave 3 donations – (i) ½ *shekalim*, used to make the *Mishkan's* *adanim* (silver sockets); (ii) ½ *shekalim* for the census, used to buy the communal *korbanot*; (iii) silver and copper voluntarily given to maintain the *Mishkan* (*Rashi*).

**Q-2. (a)** (1) Why did a *kohen* have to wash his (i) hands and (ii) feet before the *avoda*? (2) Did he have to wash in the *kiyor* (laver)? **(b)** (1) The *shemen ha-mishcha* (anointing oil) could not be poured *al zar* (on an alien) – who was a *zar* (2 views)? (2) On whom could the *shemen ha-mishcha* be smeared? **(c)** Since the *Torah* mentions only 4 spices to make the *ketoret* (incense), how do we know it included the 11 spices listed in *Keritut* 6a? **(d)** Why was *chelbena*, a foul-smelling spice, included? **(e)** What was the purpose of burning *ketoret*? (*Shemot* 30:18-21,33-38)

**A-2. (a)** (1) It was a matter of respect for *Hashem* – (i) anyone approaching a king's table and touching his food or drink would have to wash his hands; and (ii) since the *kohanim* did the *avoda* barefoot, their feet could become foul and unpleasant; (2) no, there was no preference to using the *kiyor* – they could wash in any holy vessel, like the *Kohen Gadol* who used a gold pitcher on *Yom Kippur* (*Yoma* 43b) – they could not wash under running water – a vessel had to be used (*Ramban*). **(b)** (1) Anyone who was not a (i) *kohen* or a king (*Rashi*). (ii) *kohen* – it could not be poured on a king (*ibn Ezra*). (2) It could not be smeared on anyone, including a *kohen* or king (*Ramban*). **(c)** *Hashem* told *Moshe* to take “*samim*”, plural, meaning 2 spices; *nataf*, *shecheilet* and *chelbena* – 3 more, for a total of 5 spices; “*samim*” again, meaning 5 more, for a total of 10 spices; and pure *levona*, totaling 11 spices; **(d)** it teaches *Bnei Yisrael* to include sinners as members of the congregation for fasts and prayers (*Rashi*). **(e)** It symbolized *Bnei Yisrael's* duty to make all their actions pleasing to *Hashem* (*Hirsch*).

**Q-3. (a)** What did *Hashem* convey by saying, (1) “See”, I have called [*Betzalel*]? (2) “I have called him by the name *Betzalel*” (4 views)? **(b)** How old was *Betzalel* when he designed the *Mishkan*? **(c)** How do we know that one should not appoint a leader of a community before first consulting the community? **(d)** What were the “*bigdei serad*” (2 views)? **(e)** Why does the *Torah*, concerning observing *Shabbat*, (1) add the word “*ach*” (however) “observe My *Shabbatot*” (2 views)? (2) spell “*le-dorotam*” (for their generations) without the 2 *vav's*? (*Shemot* 31:2,5,11-18)

**A-3. (a)** (1) *Hashem* wanted *Bnei Yisrael* to see how amazing *Betzalel* was – despite not being able to learn, do or even see fine craftsmanship in *Mitzrayim*, he miraculously was a highly skilled artisan in every single craft (*Ramban*). (2) (i) *Hashem* called *Betzalel* by name to build the *Mishkan* since no one else was able to do it (*ibn Ezra*). (ii) On *Har Sinai*, *Hashem* showed *Moshe* *Sefer haAdam* (the Book of Adam), which lists the leaders of every future generation – *Moshe* saw that from the time of Creation, He had named *Betzalel* to build the *Mishkan* (*Shemot Raba*). (iii) *Betzalel* stands for “*be-tzeil Keif*” (in *Hashem's* shadow) – he knew exactly how *Hashem* wanted the *Mishkan* built; (iv) *Betzalel* knew the art of combining the letters with which *Hashem* created heaven and earth – the building of the *Mishkan* was like creating the universe, and *Betzalel* understood its secret; **(b)** 13 (*Sanhedrin* 69b). **(c)** *Hashem* first asked *Moshe*, and *Moshe* asked *Bnei Yisrael* to consider appointing *Betzalel* to build the *Mishkan*, and they agreed (*Berachot* 55a). **(d)** (1) Distinctive cloths used to cover the *mishkan's* utensils while transporting them (*Rashi*). (2) Another name for the *bigdei kehuna* (*Ramban*). **(e)** (1) “*Ach*” restricts (i) doing *Mishkan* construction *melacha* (work) on *Shabbat* (*Rashi*). (ii) *Shabbat* observance when doing a *brit mila* or offering *korbanot* (*Ramban*). (2) Without the *vav's*, it can be pronounced “*le-dor tam*” (for a wholesome generation) – members of a generation that carefully observe *Shabbat* are “*tam*”, worthy offspring of *Ya'akov*, who is called “*ish tam*” (a wholesome man – *Bereishit* 25:27) (*Tana Devei Eliyahu*).

**Q-4. (a)** Why are commands to observe the *Shabbat* stated before (31:13) and after (34:18,21) the *cheit ha'eigel* incident? **(b)** (1) How was the *cheit ha'eigel* (i) *Moshe's* fault? (ii) *Hashem's* fault? (2) Why did *Bnei Yisrael* not wait until *Moshe* returned from *Sinai* (2 views)? **(c)** (1) What was the "*elohim*" that the people wanted *Aharon* to make (2 views)? (2) Why did they ask for *elohim*, in the plural? **(d)** What was it that *Aharon* "saw" that caused him to build a *mizbe'ach* and proclaim a festival? **(e)** Why did the idolaters want a calf's image? **(f)** (1) After *Aharon* made the *eigel*, why did *Hashem* reward him by appointing him *Kohen Gadol*? (2) (i) Why and (ii) how was *Aharon* punished for this? **(g)** When *Moshe* prayed that *Bnei Yisrael* be spared, he said, "remember for the sake of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak* and *Yisrael*, Your servants" – why did *Moshe* say "*Yisrael*", not "*Ya'akov*"? (*Shemot* 32:1-5,13,18-21,31)

**A-4. (a)** Keeping the *Shabbat* atones for all of *Bnei Yisrael's* sins, starting with the *cheit ha'eigel*; **(b)** (1) (i) *Hashem* did not want *Moshe* to take the *eirev rav* from *Mitzrayim* – He agreed, when *Moshe* insisted on taking them to bring them closer to Him – the *eirev rav* demanded a god to substitute for *Moshe* and worshipped the *eigel* (*Abarbanel*). (ii) *Moshe* told *Hashem* that He caused *Bnei Yisrael's* sin – by supplying them with so much gold, how could they not sin? (*Rashi*). (2) (i) They assumed he died after 40 days without food (*ibn Ezra*). (ii) On 6 *Sivan*, *Moshe* told them he would return "at the end of 40 days, during the first 6 hours" – he meant "full days", and counted from 7 *Sivan*, but they counted from 6 *Sivan* – *Satan* made them believe *Moshe* had died (*Rashi*). **(c)** (1) They asked for leadership in the form of (i) many gods with Divine powers (*Rashi*). (ii) a "spiritual glory", like the angels associated with pillars of clouds and fire that led them out of *Mitzrayim* (*ibn Ezra*). (iii) a replacement for *Moshe* to whom *Hashem* would give inspiration – they did not seek a Divine power; (2) since they did not know what form of a leader for which to ask, they asked for many, so one would emerge as best for them; **(d)** when *Aharon* saw that the people were disposed toward evil, he built a *mizbe'ach* and directed them to offer *korbanot* for *Hashem* (*Ramban*). **(e)** At *matan Torah*, *Hashem* appeared with the 4 faces of the Divine Chariot – a cow, man, lion and eagle – since the *eirev rav* would not worship a carnivore, an abomination to the *Mitzrim*, they wanted a herbivorous calf (*Shemot Raba*). **(f)** (1) *Aharon* believed that *Bnei Yisrael* had a deep-seated longing for idol worship – to expose the sinners, he agreed to their request for the calf – *Sheivet Levi*, under *Moshe's* direction, was able to exterminate them – *Aharon* was rewarded for this; (2) (i) *Aharon* erred since the sin was not intrinsic to *Bnei Yisrael*, only to the *eirev rav* – he could have separated *Bnei Yisrael* from any desire for idol worship through persuasion; (ii) *Hashem* punished him by decreeing two of his sons' death (*Tiferet Tzion*). **(g)** When *Hashem* named *Ya'akov* "*Yisrael*", He said, "a nation and a congregation of nations shall descend from you" (*Bereshit* 35:11) – "a nation" referring to *Binyamin* and "a congregation of nations" referring to *Efrayim* and *Menashe* – the promises of these "nations" could not be come from *Moshe*, who was from *Sheivet Levi* – *Moshe* "reminded" Him to carry out His promise by keeping alive all of *Yisrael's* *shevatim* (*Maharil Diskin*).

**Q-5. (a)** Why did *Hashem* list only 6 of the 7 nations that He would drive out from *Cana'an*? **(b)** When saying that an angel would lead *Bnei Yisrael* to *Eretz Yisrael*, why did *Hashem* again call it "a land flowing with milk and honey"? **(c)** (1) Why did *Moshe* move the *ohel mo'ed* (his tent) outside the camp? (2) For what period was it outside the camp (2 views)? **(d)** (1) What did *Moshe* seek to comprehend when he said to *Hashem*, "Show me Your Glory" and (2) What did *Hashem* reply? (*Shemot* 33:2-11,18)

**Q-5. (a)** The *Girgashi* are not listed since they abandoned *Cana'an* on their own when *Bnei Yisrael* approached (*Rashi*). **(b)** The *Shema* says that idolatry's punishment is unproductive land (*Devarim* 11:17) – *Bnei Yisrael* thought after the *cheit ha'eigel*, *Hashem* would make *Eretz Yisrael* unproductive – He told them that the land would be good, flowing with milk and honey (*Oznayim leTorah*). **(c)** (1) Because of the *eigel's tumah*, *Hashem* did not want to speak to *Moshe* in *Bnei Yisrael's* camp until the *Mishkan* was built (*Rashbam*). (2) *Moshe* moved his tent on (i) 18 *Tamuz*, the day after breaking the *luchot*, until *Rosh Chodesh Nisan*, when the *Mishkan* was dedicated as the new *ohel mo'ed* (*Ramban*). (ii) 11 *Tishrei*, the day after returning from *Sinai* with the 2<sup>nd</sup> *luchot*, until *Rosh Chodesh Nisan* (*Rashi*). **(d)** (1) He asked for so clear an understanding of *Hashem's* Existence that the knowledge might be like what one has for a human, whose face one has seen and whose image is imprinted on his mind, and whom his mind distinguishes from other beings, so he knows – by way of miracle – the truth of His Existence; (2) *Hashem* responded that it is beyond the mental capacity of a being of a body and soul to obtain clear knowledge of the Truth, but He imparted to *Moshe* what no man has before or since known (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Yesodei haTorah* 1:10).

**Q-6. (a)** (1) How did *Moshe* become wealthy? (2) Why did *Hashem* make him rich? (3) Why must a prophet be wealthy (2 views)? **(b)** Why did *Hashem* ban everyone from going with *Moshe* up *Har Sinai* to get the 2<sup>nd</sup> *luchot*? **(c)** In *Hashem's* 13 Attributes of Mercy, (1) why is "*Hashem*" stated twice? (2) what does the attribute "*ve'emet*" (and truth) convey about His way of punishing sinners? (3) to what attribute of reward and punishment does "*ve-chata'ah*" refer? **(d)** Why is the letter *reish* in "*eil achier*" ([not to bow to] another god) enlarged? **(e)** Why does the *Torah* here ban eating what a heathen slaughters – eating *neveila* is already separately banned? **(f)** Why does the *Torah* say 3 times that *Moshe's* face became radiant after returning from *Sinai*? (*Shemot* 34:1,6-7,14-15,29-35)

**A-6. (a)** (1) When telling *Moshe* to carve the *luchot* from sapphire, *Hashem* said, "*pesol lecha*" (carve for yourself) – the carved chips became "yours" – *Moshe's* – making him rich (*Rashi*). (2) *Hashem* imparts prophesy only to someone mighty, wealthy, wise and humble (*Nedarim* 38a). (3) (i) It maintain his authority over the people, who respect wealth (*Ran*). (ii) Only one financially secure can admonish the people fearlessly (*Shita Mekubetzet*). **(b)** The 1<sup>st</sup> *luchot*, given with fanfare, were affected by the evil eye and did not survive – the 2<sup>nd</sup> *luchot*, given quietly to *Moshe*, lasted (*Rashi*). **(c)** (1) To tell us that *Hashem* has the same compassion (i) before one sins, as He has (ii) after he sins and repents; (2) *Hashem* joins *chesed* (mercy) to *emet*, to delay punishment, even if, based on *emet*, one deserves instant punishment; (3) if one's merits equal his sins, *Hashem* reduces the sins' weight so the scales tip in his favor (*Rosh Hashana* 17b). **(d)** It prevents us from wrongly reading the *reish* as a *daled*, i.e., "*Keil echad*" (one G-d) – the *daled* also is large in the *Shema's* 1<sup>st</sup> verse, so as not to read "[*Hashem*,] another god" (*Ba'al haTurim*). **(e)** Even if a non-Jew does a proper *shechita* in a Jew's presence, with a perfect knife, the *shechita* is *neveila* (*Rambam* – *Hilchot Shechita* 4:11-12). **(f)** Its shine reflected *Moshe's* 3 accomplishments – (1) leading *Bnei Yisrael* from *Mitzrayim*; (2) receiving the *Torah* at *Sinai*; (3) saving them from destruction for the *cheit ha'eigel* (*Medrash Tanchuma*).

**Q-7.** In the *haftara*, why did *Ba'al's* prophets agree to the contest to have their deity send fire to burn their *korbanot* (4 views)? (1 *Melachim* 18:23)

**A-7. (a)** *Ba'al* followers worshipped the sun, which has a "husband-wife" (*ba'al ve-ishto*) relationship with the moon – since the sun radiates heat, *Ba'al's* prophets believed it ruled over fire – they hoped *Ba'al* would ignite their altar's wood; **(b)** *Bnei Yisrael* favored the contest – they would have stoned *Ba'al's* prophets for refusing to participate; **(c)** since *Eliyahu* violated *Torah* law by sacrificing outside the *Beit haMikdash*, they assumed he would be no more successful than they; **(d)** they assumed that their and *Eliyahu's* sacrifices would be offered simultaneously, and *Hashem's* fire would consume both – when *Eliyahu* instructed them offer their sacrifices first, they were unable to withdraw (*Abarbanel*).